

MINNESOTA DAILY  
13 February 1981

# University campus still scene of CIA's activities

By Carla Wheeler  
Copyright 1981  
Minnesota Daily

Despite the decline of 1970s radicalism, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) remains active on college campuses. The University of Minnesota is no exception.

CIA involvement on campus has included possible attempts to recruit students to spy on each other, CIA-financed research experiments, and debriefing of faculty returning from visits overseas.

CIA questioning of University professors who have visited the Soviet Union or other socialist nations is a common occurrence, according to a University professor who asked not to be named.

Debriefing is one means the CIA uses to get information about a country, the professor said, and it is perfectly legal.

Jonathan Rosner, a physics teacher, was questioned by a CIA agent in 1970. Rosner remembers the agents' visit clearly.

The man came into the office and closed the door, Rosner said. He was "hush hush" about the visit, he added.

The CIA agent then handed Rosner a list of technical questions to answer. The questions concerned Soviet laboratories Rosner had visited on his trip.

"I didn't notice a lot of things they asked about," Rosner said. Rosner refused to specify what the CIA wanted to know. That would be "a breach of confidence," he said.

Five minutes after the agent's arrival, Rosner said he became worried about talking with the CIA because he had told some of his colleagues in the department about the agent's upcoming visit, and somehow the word leaked out to the students. The agent had told Rosner that telling friends about the CIA's visit "is not to your advantage."

"I got a little anxious at that point," Rosner said.

Rosner said he told the agent he was annoyed by the secrecy surrounding the visit, but was told the Soviets question their scholars too. The agent accused the Soviets of many unethical practices, Rosner said. "He said things like 'they (Soviets) rape our women,'" Rosner added.

Rosner said the CIA has not contacted him since that day in 1970, "but I haven't been to Russia since then."

"Legitimate data gathering by the CIA is understandable, but not all this secrecy nonsense," Rosner said. This type of activity is "not good for free conferences," he said.

Talking with the CIA about an overseas trip hurts a scholar's contacts with colleagues in other nations and affects other academics, said Burton Paulu, retired professor and director of Media Resources at the University.

CIA contact "lowers the credibility of reporters, researchers, and teachers," said Paulu, who has been questioned by the CIA several times after trips abroad. Academics and reporters "have to be above suspicion," he said. Providing the CIA with information "affects the objectivity of scholars of the media," he said.

Paulu agreed to talk to the CIA in 1958 after a visit to the Soviet Union. The CIA agents asked about "my general impressions of the trip," Paulu said.

In 1965 agents phoned Paulu after another visit to Eastern Europe. "I would not talk to them," he said.

Paulu said he told the agent to read a book he was about to publish.

Paulu returned from a three-month teaching engagement in the Soviet Union last December, and a CIA agent called him again. "I refused to talk to them," Paulu said.

CIA agents usually contact department chairpersons and ask who has been abroad recently and if the chairperson thinks the professor will talk to the CIA, said Erwin Marquit, associate professor of physics, who accompanied Rosner to the Soviet Union in 1970.

"They're (chairpersons) acting as fingermen" for the CIA, Marquit said. The chairpersons "don't want to be in a position of not cooperating with government agencies," he said. A record of non-cooperation could hurt their careers, Marquit added.

Marquit and several other University professors wrote an opinion article in the Minnesota Daily in early 1971 calling for an "end to University involvement in intelligence activity."

"The administration and regents must make it clear to the federal government that the use of University by intelligence agencies is harmful to the national interest and can only interfere with the University fulfilling its proper role," the opinion piece said.

"Graduate students and faculty are scared of having their views known," Marquit said. "This is a very evil situation."

"I don't think University should officially cooperate with the intelligence community," said University President C. Peter Magrath in an interview with the Daily on Wednesday.

"I believe that much of that information that probably comes from discussions of that kind (debriefings) are really pretty innocuous kinds of basic information," Magrath said. "I think that it is very damaging, potentially, to University researchers if they are believed to be involved in some way, not so much with spying, but with things related to the intelligence community."

But people can't be prevented from talking to somebody about their research, Magrath said. "I sincerely believe it's a tough area to regulate," he said.

ENDED